For societies, the nation-state model is nothing but a pitfall and network of suppression and exploitation. The democratic nation concept reverses this definition. The definition of a democratic nation that is not bound by rigid political boundaries and a single language, culture, religion and interpretation of history, signifies plurality and communities as well as free and equal citizens existing together and in solidarity. The democratic nation allows the people to become a nation themselves, without relying on power and state – becoming a nation through much-needed politicisation. It aims to prove that in the absence of becoming a state or acquiring power, and without politicisation, a nation can be created with autonomous institutions in the social, diplomatic and cultural spheres as well as in economy, law and self-defence, and thus build itself as a democratic nation. Democratic society can only be realised through such a nation model. The nation-state society is closed to democracy by its very nature. The nation-state represents neither a universal nor a local reality; on the contrary, it disavows universality and locality. The citizenship of an uniformised society

Democratic Nation

Abdullah Öcalan

English

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Democratic Nation

Abdullah Öcalan

Contents

Foreword

The International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan" strives not only to publish Abdullah Öcalan's works in different languages but also to prepare brochures compiled from different books by him on specific topics. This is useful and necessary not only because it brings together the chain of argument on a specific topic spread over several books, but also because some of his works are still untranslated.

Therefore, this brochure should only be regarded as a framework and cannot replace the perusal of the actual books. Öcalan has been highly critical not only of capitalism but also of real socialist practices from very early on, since the 1980s. He has examined the issue of women's freedom, the phenomena of power and state and how interrelated they all are. This has led him over and over again to return to an analysis of history to try to understand how it all happened. In doing so he stumbled over nation, state and nation-state and how detrimental these are for any movement; turning even the most revolutionary individuals into mere practitioners of capitalism.

For Abdullah Öcalan it is not sufficient to produce critique and self-critique. He feels compelled to lay out what might constitute an alternative to the way of life that is being imposed on society. Therefore, he makes an effort to systematise the lives and struggles of all those oppressed and exploited throughout history, as well as to propose an alternative model

and way of life outside of capitalist modernity and thus classical civilisation.

These brochures become ever more important in the light of developments in the region as well as in Kurdistan. With the revival of sectarian and nationalist conflict in many areas of the world and the consequences of an aggressive capitalism confronting the world, Öcalan's proposals and an evident effort to implement them in Rojava and Bakur might be just the right remedy for the war-stricken region. He calls upon everybody to build and defend free life and humanity. Öcalan's voice is tremendously important as a voice of peace and reason, but it is all too often silenced by his solitary confinement on the isolated İmralı Island where he is imprisoned. His freedom is in the interest of all peoples in the Middle East – not only for the Kurds.

International Initiative
"Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan"

1. Introduction

Until now, the PKK's struggle has essentially been aimed at making the Kurdish question visible. The denial of Kurdish reality during the time of its formation naturally brought the question of existence on to the agenda. Thus, the PKK at first tried to prove the existence of the question, by means of ideological arguments. The continuation of this denial by the left, through more refined methods, put organising on the basis of separate identities and action on the agenda.

The Turkish nation-state—which insisted on traditional denial and annihilation policies—refused to consider the possibility of a political solution during this period. On the contrary, it chose to counter the PKK's initiatives with a campaign of fascist terror that led up to the 12 September coup. The PKK's declaration of a revolutionary people's war emerged as the only viable option. Under these conditions, the PKK was either going to wither away, like the other democratic left groups in Turkey, or decide on resistance. The decisive factor in the transformation of the Kurdish question from being one of ideological identity into a question of war is the state's insistence on maintaining previously covert policies of denial and annihilation through the open terror of 12 September. It would be more realistic to analyse the offensive of 15 August 1984 within this framework. Such a move is much closer to the objective of proving the existence of the Kurdish people and protecting their existence than of being a liberation move-

ment. It should be pointed out that, in this regard, it has attained a significant success.

The PKK, while proving Kurdish existence beyond any doubt, got stuck in nation-statism. The ensuing period of self-criticism revealed the anti-socialist and anti-democratic essence of nation-statism. The speedy dissolution of real socialism in the 1990s contributed to a deeper understanding of the underlying factors behind the crisis. The dissolution of real socialism was caused by power and real socialist nation-state problematics. To be more precise, the crisis of socialism was the result of an inadequate understanding of the problem of power and the state. When the contradictions of state and power, set out so starkly by the Kurdish question, coalesced with the wider global crisis of real socialism, a comprehensive analysis of the issue of the state and power became inevitable.

To this end, in a significant part of my defence, I tried to analyse the state and power throughout civilisational history. I concentrated on presenting the transformation of the phenomena of state and power in the context of capitalist modernity – the present-day hegemonic civilisation. I specifically argued that the transformation of power into the nation-state was the basis of capitalism. This was an important thesis. I tried to demonstrate that in the absence of power being organised through the nation-state model, capitalism could not have become the new hegemonic system. The nation-state was the fundamental tool that made capitalist hegemony possible. Therefore, I tried to prove that socialism, as anti-capitalism, presenting itself as what I call 'historical-society', could not establish itself as based on the same state model, in other words, as a real socialist nation-state. I tried to show that the idea that socialism, as proposed by Marx and Engels, could only be constructed through central nation-states was indeed a fundamental defect of scientific socialism. I went on to present

the thesis that socialism could not be constructed through the state, especially the nation-state, and that an insistence on this could only result in the most degenerate versions of capitalism as experienced in many instances, but especially in the actually existing socialism of Russia and China. As a necessary precursor to this thesis, I analysed the system of central civilisation throughout history, the concept of power, and the structure of capitalist modernity's state and power which is the prevalent structure unique to our era. My main conclusion was that socialists could not have a nation-state principle. Rather, the solution to the national question should be based on the principle of the democratic nation. The practical expression of this, as I will try to show, is the KCK (Union of Democratic Communities in Kurdistan) experience.

Kurdistan, in a way, has already become the focus of revolution and counter-revolution in the twenty-first century. It is the weakest link of capitalist modernity. The national and social problems of the people of Kurdistan have become so aggravated that they cannot be concealed by means of liberal prescriptions or the demagogy of individual or cultural rights. When it comes to the Kurdish question, nation-statism—which led to different practices, including cultural genocide—is no longer a problem-solver; rather, it has long been the source of the problem, both for the oppressor and the oppressed. Nation-statism is in dissolution and it has even become a problem for capitalist modernity. More flexible democratic national developments will spearhead the advances of our era. Democratic modernity signifies the theoretical expression and the practical steps of these advances. The KCK, as the concrete expression of democratic national transformations in Kurdistan, sheds light on the path of democratic modernity solution in the Middle East.

2. Capitalist Modernity and the Nation

The nation, as a concept, comes after entities such as clan and tribe with kinship in the form of people and nationality, and is a social form generally characterised by linguistic or cultural similarities. National communities are more inclusionary and have larger capacities than clans and people's communities; for this reason, they are human communities with looser ties to one another. National society is more a phenomenon of our time. If a general definition can be offered, it is a community of those who share a common mindset. In other words, it is a phenomenon that exists mentally, which therefore means it is an abstract and imagined phenomenon. We can also call this a culturally defined nation. Sociologically speaking, this would be the correct definition. Despite differing class, gender, colour, ethnicity and even national background, in the most general sense the formation of a shared mindset and culture is enough to be classified as a nation.

In order to refine this general definition of nation, generated concepts such as state nation, legal nation, economic nation and military nation are different categories of nationalism that are used to underpin the understanding of this general definition of nation. It could also be called 'power nation'. It is a fundamental aspiration of capitalist modernity to become a strong nation, in as much as a strong nation produces capital privilege, a comprehensive market, colonial opportunities and imperialism. It is, therefore, important not to accept these robust versions as the only possible models of a nation. In fact,

it is important to see these power nations as nations in the service of capital. These are the qualities that make the nation-state the source of the problems I am interested in here.

The main problem in the age of modernity derives from the coupling of power and state with the nation. When we compare the problems of this age with the problems of dictatorships and dynastic states, we can see that the problems of the age of modernity derive from the 'state nation'; this is the biggest difference between the ages. The nation-state is one of the most convoluted subjects within the social sciences, yet it is presented as the tool to solve all the problems that face modernity, like a magic wand. In essence, it only multiplies social problems, because it spreads its power apparatus into the capillaries of societies. Power itself creates problems – it generates social problems because of the potential character of capital that has been organised by force, which results in suppression and exploitation. The homogeneous nation society to which the nation-state aspires can only construct artificially (supposedly legal) equal citizens, charged with violence as a result of being amputated by power. These citizens may be equal in the eyes of the law, but they experience maximum inequality in every aspect of life as a individuals and as a collective entity.

When analysing the theory of nation, another aspect that needs to be critically evaluated is the sacralisation and deification of the nation. Capitalist modernity has replaced traditional religion and God and constructed the deified nation-state. If we interpret nationalism as the religion of the nation-state, then we can perceive the nation-state itself to be the god of this religion. The state has been constructed in the age of modernity in order to incorporate the essence of medieval and even antiquarian conceptualisations of divinity. The phenomenon called the 'secular state' is the construction of medieval

and antiquarian divinities as state either in whole or in essence. There should be no confusion here. Once you scrape off the secular or modern nation-state veneer, you encounter the divine state of antiquity and the medieval age. There is a strong correlation between state and divinity. In the same manner, there is a very strong relationship between the rising monarch of antiquity and the medieval age and the concept of God. After the medieval age, when the monarch lost his significance, both as an individual and in terms of the monarchy, and began to institutionalise and transmute into the national state, the god-monarch was replaced by the nation-state god. Therefore, capitalist modernity's ideological hegemony, which makes the attainment of maximum profit possible, is what underlies the sacralisation of concepts such as the homeland, nation and market, together with a similar sacralisation of nation-state institutions. The law of maximum profit becomes more legitimate as the concepts related to the nation are religionised by the ideological hegemony and thus validated.

In our age, the use of nation-state symbols and fundamental slogans such as 'one flag', 'one language', 'one homeland', 'one state' and 'unitary state', and the expression of national chauvinism, are ramped up and turned into rituals at every opportunity, especially at sporting events or during art activities, should be interpreted as the means of worshipping the religion of nationalism. In fact, the practice of worship in previous ages served the same purpose. The main objective here is to validate the interests of monopolies of power and exploitation through concealing or legitimising them. We will be better able to understand the truth of societal reality once we interpret all the practices and approaches that serve to hide or exaggerate those things related to the nation-state under this fundamental paradigm.

The organisation of capitalist modernity as nation-state plays

a much more suppressive and exploitative role then its organisation as an economic monopoly. The inability of Marxism, and sociology in general, to see the nation-state's relationship with suppression and exploitation, or its presentation of the nation-state as an ordinary institution of the superstructure, is a fundamental flaw and distortion. When an analysis of class and material capital is made independent of the nation-state, what's being produced is a stale and abstract generalisation that cannot generate a useful social result. Such abstractions, and their consequences, underlie the failure of real socialism.

That the solution to all national and social problems is linked to the nation-state represents the most tyrannical aspect of modernity. To expect a solution from the tool which is itself the source of the problem can only lead to further problems and societal chaos. Capitalism itself is the most crisis-ridden stage of civilisation. The nation-state, as the tool deployed in this crisis-ridden stage, is the most developed organisation of violence in social history. It is society besieged by the violence of power; it is the tool deployed forcefully to hold society and the environment together after they have been disintegrated through industrialism and capitalism's law of maximum profit. The reason it is excessively charged with violence is due to the capitalist system's tendency for maximum profit and uninterrupted accumulation. Without an organisation of violence like the nation-state, the laws of capitalist accumulation could not operate and industrialism could not be maintained. Society and the environment are on the brink of total disintegration in this present era of global financial capitalism. The crises, which were initially cyclical, have now attained a structural and permanent character. Under these circumstances, the nation-state itself has turned into an obstacle that locks the system down completely. Even capitalism, which is a crisis-ridden system itself, has made getting rid of the obstacle of the nation-state

a priority. The sovereignty of the nation-state is not only the cause of societal problems, but is the main obstacle to finding solutions.

The theory of democratic modernity, on the other hand, is not only critical of capitalism's political economy, but of its whole system. Democratic modernity criticises capitalism's relationship with civilisational history as a hegemonic system; the changes it has caused in city, class and state; and the elements upon which it constructs its modernity in order to uncover its reality. Capitalist modernity continuously legitimises itself through the ideological hegemony it establishes over science, philosophy and the arts. By instrumentalising these fundamental fields of thought and draining them of their content, it deepens its destruction of society.

3. Democratic Modernity

The alternative modernity for the democratic nation is democratic modernity. An economy free of monopolism, an ecology that signifies harmony with the environment, and a technology that is friendly to nature and humanity are the institutional bases of democratic modernity and thus the democratic nation. I have neither discovered nor invented democratic modernity. Democratic modernity, since the formation of official civilisation, has always existed as its counterpart in a dichotomy. It has existed wherever and whenever an official civilisation has existed. What I am trying to do, albeit as a rough outline, is to give this other form of modernity – which exists at each location and time alongside official civilisation – the recognition it deserves, and offer explanations in terms of its main dimensions. I am also trying to understand its fundamental forms of mindset, its structures and its existing society, and to define them. There is nothing baffling about the idea that, according to dialectics, there exists a counterpart to civilisation, although alleged to be singular, at all places and periods that it has existed. To the contrary, the baffling thing is why this most natural equivalent of dialectical method has not been systematically articulated.

Democratic modernity, though it has changed form according to different eras, has always existed and is a reality that has always had its own counter-history throughout civilisational history. It signifies the system of universal history that is outside of the forces of tyranny and exploitation. Kurdish reality

represents a culture that has received the severest blows from civilisational forces, and is a culture that has been attacked by forces intent on exterminating it. Therefore, it can only realise its existence through a civilisation which is outside traditional classed civilisation – as a democratic socialist civilisation. If a meaningful Kurdish history is to be written, it can only be done so within this framework. The present-day expression of this is democratic modernity.

Democratic modernity responds to the universalist, linear, progressivist and determinist methodology (the methodological approach that is closed to probabilities and alternatives) deployed by the modern nation-state to achieve the homogenisation and herdification of society with methods that are pluralistic, probabilistic, open to alternatives and that can make democratic society visible. It develops its alternative through its properties of being open to different political formations, multicultural, closed to monopolism, ecological and feminist, creating an economic structure that is grounded in satisfying society's fundamental needs and is at the disposal of the community. As opposed to capitalist modernity's nation-state, democratic confederalism is democratic modernity's political alternative.

Democratic confederalism is the basic political format of democratic modernity; it plays a vital role in reconstruction work and is the most appropriate tool for helping democratic politics generate a solution. Democratic confederalism presents the option of a democratic nation as the fundamental tool to resolve the ethnic, religious, urban, local, regional and national problems caused by the monolithic, homogeneous, monochrome, fascist social model implemented by modernity's nation-state. Within the democratic nation every ethnicity, religious understanding and city, local, regional and national entity has the right to participate with its own identity and democratic federate structure.

4. Democratic Solution

There have always been attempts to solve the national problems caused by capitalist modernity by nation-statist and nationalist mindsets and paradigms. The nation-state itself has been presented as the main factor in providing a solution. In order to gain a true understanding of the nation-state one must understand its place in the hegemonic system and its links to capitalism and industrialism. The inadequate analysis of the question of state by socialist ideology only obscures the problem further. However, in 'the right of nations to self-determination', the vision of a state for every nation was fundamental in aggravating the issue even more.

The essence of my defence is to research the Kurdish reality and Kurdish people's existence in relation to civilisation and modernity. The aim is to explain that capitalism was primarily responsible for the rise of the Kurdish question and to separate the democratic essence of the solution from nation-statism for the first time. This approach constitutes the essence of the transformation within the PKK. This defence explains the difference between forms of statist and democratic solutions that have not been clarified since the PKK's group phase. This is where it differs from real socialism and the classic Marxist-Leninist doctrine behind it. It takes the right of nations to self-determination from its enclosure as a bourgeois right, and includes it within the scope of societal democracy. In other words, the Kurdish question could be solved without

being contaminated by statism, without gravitating towards a nation-statist pursuit and, without being forced into solutions under these categories, it could be resolved within democratic governance models of society. This is the essence of the transformation of the PKK.

The democratic solution model is not just an option, it is the primary method for achieving a solution. The democratic solution signifies the pursuit of the democratisation of society outside of the nation-state. As a concept, it sees the nation-state, along with capitalism, as the source of ever-increasing problems and not the solution in relation to social problems. One should not think of the democratic solution model as a unitary nation-state that has been transformed into a federal or confederal form. The federal or confederal state of the nation-state is not the democratic solution. These are solutions that rely on different forms of the state, and yet only aggravate the problem. Perhaps the transformation of a rigidly centralised nation-state into federal or confederal forms within the capitalist system's mindset may ameliorate problems and offer partial solutions, but it cannot lead to comprehensive solutions. Federal and confederal forms can be deployed as possible solutions between the nation-statist forces and the forces for a democratic solution. However, to expect a deep-rooted solution as a result will only lead yet again to self-deception. Indeed, we know that states described as national liberationist states or real socialist states are just nation-states with a leftist mask.

It is important to note that the democratic solution method is not completely independent of the nation-state. Democracy and the nation-state can play a role under the same political roof as two authorities. A democratic constitution can determine the domain for each of them. A positive transformation of the nation-state is closely linked to the development of de-

mocratisation and democratic autonomous governance, and the construction of the democratic nation, local democracy and democratic culture in all social spheres.

The KCK should be evaluated as a radical transformation in the solution to the national question as it represents the non-statist democratic interpretation of the right of nations to self-determination for the Kurdish question. KCK is the concrete expression of the democratic solution to the Kurdish question and differs from traditional approaches. The solution is not regarded as taking a share from the state. It is not in the pursuit of state, even in terms of autonomy for the Kurds. Not only does it not aim for a federal or confederal state, it does not see them as the solution. Its main demand from the state is for it to recognise the Kurdish people's right to self-governance and to remove the obstacles in the way of the Kurdish people becoming a democratic nation. The democratic solution cannot be developed by governments or states. Societal forces are themselves solely responsible for developing the solution. Societal forces seek to find a compromise with the government or the state through a democratic constitution. The sharing of governance between democratic societal forces and the state or government forces is determined through constitutions.

Essentially, the democratic solution is the state of being a democratic nation and of society constructing itself as a democratic national entity. It is neither becoming a nation nor ceasing to be a nation through the state; it is the ability to use the right of a society to construct itself as a democratic nation. At this stage, a new definition of the nation must be created. First, it is worth noting that the term nation does not have a single definition. I touched on this above. The democratic nation, on the other hand, is the common society formed by the free will of free individuals and communities. The unifying factor in the democratic nation is the free will of the people

and those groups who decide to belong to that nation. The understanding that binds the nation to a common language, culture, market or history is descriptive of nation-states and cannot be generalised, that is, it cannot be reduced to a single understanding of the nation. This understanding of nation, which was also acknowledged by real socialism, is the opposite of the democratic nation.

This definition, as developed by Stalin for Soviet Russia, is one of the main reasons for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. If this definition of nation, absolutised by capitalist modernity, is not abandoned, then the solution to all national problems will continue to meet an impasse. The fact that national problems have persisted for the past three centuries is closely linked to this inadequate and absolute definition.

5. The Democratic Nation Model

For societies, the nation-state model is nothing but a pitfall and network of suppression and exploitation. The democratic nation concept reverses this definition. The definition of a democratic nation that is not bound by rigid political boundaries and a single language, culture, religion and interpretation of history, signifies plurality and communities as well as free and equal citizens existing together and in solidarity. The democratic nation allows the people to become a nation themselves, without relying on power and state – becoming a nation through much-needed politicisation. It aims to prove that in the absence of becoming a state or acquiring power, and without politicisation, a nation can be created with autonomous institutions in the social, diplomatic and cultural spheres as well as in economy, law and self-defence, and thus build itself as a democratic nation.

Democratic society can only be realised through such a nation model. The nation-state society is closed to democracy by its very nature. The nation-state represents neither a universal nor a local reality; on the contrary, it disavows universality and locality. The citizenship of an uniformised society represents the death of the human. On the other hand, the democratic nation makes the reconstruction of universality and locality possible. It enables societal reality to express itself. All other definitions of nation lie between these two main models.

Although there is a wide range of definitions for nation-

building models, an all-encompassing definition is also possible; and this is the definition of nation in relation to its mindset, consciousness and belief. In this case, the nation is a community of people who share a common mindset. In such a definition of nation, language, religion, culture, market, history and political borders play not a decisive but a bodily role. Defining nation essentially as a certain mindset gives it a dynamic character. Whereas in nation-states nationalism leaves its mark on the common mindset, in a democratic nation it is the consciousness of freedom and solidarity. However, defining nations only through their mindset would be incomplete. Just as mindsets cannot exist without bodies, nations too cannot function without a body. The body of nations with a nationalist mindset is the state institution. This is why such nations are called nation-states. When legal and economic institutions outweigh the rest, these nations can be differentiated by categorising them as law or market nations.

Nations with a mindset based on freedom and solidarity exemplify democratic autonomy. Democratic autonomy essentially denotes the self-governance of communities and individuals who share a similar mindset through their own will. This could also be called democratic governance or authority. It is a definition open to universality. A nation model that can be derived from the concept of a 'culture nation', but which kerbs and excludes exploitation and suppression, is a democratic nation model. A democratic nation is the nation closest to freedom and equality. And in accordance with this definition, this is the ideal understanding of nation for communities who strive for freedom and equality.

Capitalist modernity, and the science of sociology that it has inspired, has not dealt with the concept of the democratic nation due to its structure and ideological hegemony. The democratic nation is not content with a common mindset and

culture – it is a nation that unifies and governs all its members in democratic autonomous institutions. This is its defining quality. The democratic autonomous way of governance is the foremost condition of becoming a democratic nation. In this regard, it is the alternative to the nation-state. Democratic governance as opposed to state governance is a significant opportunity for freedom and equality. Liberal sociology equates the nation either with an already established state, or with a movement that aims to establish a state. The fact that even real socialism had such ambitions shows the strength of liberal ideology.

A common homeland and market are generally presented as preconditions for national societies; these are material components and cannot be considered to be determinant characteristics of the nation. The democratic nation's understanding of homeland and market are different. The democratic nation values the homeland because it is hugely important for the nation's mindset and culture; a mindset and culture that does not keep the homeland in mind can not be imagined. However, it should not be forgotten that the reason why capitalist modernity fetishises and prioritises the country-homeland concept over society is profit-motivated. It is also important not to exaggerate the homeland. 'Everything for the country' derives from a fascistic understanding of the nation. It is more meaningful to devote everything to a free society and a democratic nation, but this should not be fetishised. What really matters is to render life valuable. The homeland isn't an ideal, it is merely a tool for the life of the individual and the nation. While the state's nation pursues homogenised society, the democratic nation mainly consists of different collectivities. It sees diversity as richness. Life itself is only possible through diversity.

The nation-state forces citizens to be uniform; in this regard, too, it is contrary to life. The ultimate goal is to create a robot-

ic human. In this sense, it actually runs towards nothingness. The citizen or member of the democratic nation is different, and this difference is due to the diverse communities it embodies. Tribal entities are a source of strength for the democratic nation.

Although language is as important as culture in creating a nation, it is not a precondition. Different languages are no obstacle to a sense of belonging to the same nation. Just as it is unnecessary for every nation to have a state, it is also unnecessary for every nation to have a single language or dialect. Although a national language is needed, it is not an indispensable condition. It is possible to count different languages and dialects as a source of richness for a democratic nation. However, the nation-state bases itself on a strict imposition of a single language. It does not easily give multilingualism, especially official multilingualism, a chance to be practised. In this regard, it tries to benefit from the privileges of being the dominant nation.

When democratic nations are unable to develop and nation-statism is unable to resolve problems, it is possible to talk of a law nation as a concept and to find a compromise. What is meant by 'constitutional citizenship' is actually a solution based on the law nation. A constitutionally guaranteed legal citizenship does not discriminate between race, ethnicity and nationality. These characteristics do not accord rights. In this regard, 'law nation' is a developing category. European nations in particular are transitioning from nationality nations to law nations. In democratic nations, autonomous governance is fundamental; in a law nation, rights are fundamental; whereas in the nation-state, it is the rule of power that is decisive. The most dangerous nation type is the 'army nation' mindset and its institutionalisation. Although it may seem as if it represents a strong nation, in essence it is the most difficult nation to

live in, containing a mindset that always imposes duties and leads to fascism. The economic nation is a category very similar to the nation-state. This understanding of a nation, seen in countries such as the USA, Japan and even Germany, where the economy is given a leading role, was more prevalent in Europe's past. Although a socialist nation was attempted, it can't be said that it was very successful. This is partially what we are witnessing in Cuba. However, this example of a nation is also the real socialist form of the nation-state; in place of a nation-state with mostly private capitalism, it is a nation-state form that contains mostly state capitalism.

The democratic nation is the model of a nation that is the least exposed to such illnesses of being a state nation. It does not sacralise its government. Governance is a simple phenomenon that is at the service of daily life. Anyone who meets the requirements can become a public servant and govern. Leadership is valuable, but not sacred. Its understanding of national identity is open-ended, not fixed like being a believer or a member of a religion. Belonging to a nation is neither a privilege nor a flaw. One can belong to more than one nation. To be more precise, one can experience intertwined and different nationalities. If a law nation and a democratic nation reach a compromise, they can comfortably coexist. Homeland, flag and language are all valuable but not sacred. To experience the admixture of common homeland, languages and flags through amity and sharing and not confrontation is not only possible, but necessary for historical society life. With all these characteristics, the democratic nation is once again taking its place in history as a robust alternative to capitalist modernity's maddening instrument of war: nation-statism.

The democratic nation model, as a constructive solution model, redemocratises those societal relations that have been shattered by nation-statism; it renders different identities tol-

erant, peaceful and reconciliatory. The evolution of nation-states into democratic nations will bring about enormous gains. The democratic nation model ameliorates violence-loaded social perceptions through a caring social consciousness and renders them humane (a human being who is intelligent, sensitive and empathetic). It may not completely eliminate social antipathies but it can minimise the violence of exploitation, and help to realise the possibility of a more equal and free society. It not only fosters internal peace and tolerance, it also transcends suppressive and exploitative approaches to other nations and transforms common interests into synergies through which it realises its mission. Once national and international institutions are reconstructed according to the fundamental mindset and institutions of the democratic nation, it will be understood that this new modernity, democratic modernity, has the attributes of a renaissance not only theoretically but also in its implementation. The alternative to capitalist modernity is democratic modernity, with the democratic nation at its core, and the economic, ecological and peaceful society it has woven within and outside of the democratic nation.

5.1 Kurds Becoming a Nation

It is possible to think of the process through which the Kurds became a nation in the context of two fundamental concepts.

The first is the mental, or the dimension of the Kurdish mindset. They will not neglect their own language, culture, history, economy or population growth. But at the same time they will unite their state of consciousness with a feeling of joint solidarity in relation to these fundamental areas. We are thus talking about the dimensions of existence of those that share such a mindset. The main characteristic of this dimension is that people share the mindset of an ideal, free and equal

world based on diversity. We can call this world the communal world, or a utopia of free individuals. The important thing is to continuously maintain a mindset of freedom and equality that does not reject differences within the public sphere or the moral and political life of society.

Because the mental dimension concerns the world of thought and imagination as well as the solidarity of individuals and communities wanting to become a nation, it requires a limited rearrangement. To this end, developing education in science, philosophy and art (including religion), and opening schools with this objective, are the foremost practical steps; intellectual and emotional education in relation to becoming a nation is the task of these schools. It is essential to understand social culture in relation to our current epoch, just as much as in relation to the historical-societal entity, and to share true, good and beautiful aspects in common thoughts and emotions. In a nutshell, the KCK's main intellectual task is to envisage the Kurds as a nation within their true, good and beautiful world of thought and emotions jointly shared in relation to their own existence. In other words, its task is to encourage the Kurdish people to become a nation by means of a scientific, philosophical and artistic revolution, and to create the fundamental conditions (intellectual and emotional) for becoming such a nation, freely sharing the scientific, philosophical (ideological) and artistic truth of Kurdish reality. The way to go about realizing this is through self-thought and self-education, sharing the good and living well. The main thing demanded of the sovereign nation-states in terms of the intellectual dimension, is for them to adhere fully to freedom of expression and thought. If nation-states want to coexist with the Kurds under common norms, then they must respect the Kurdish people's desire to create their own intellectual and emotional world and to turn themselves into a national society

on the basis of their own differences: the freedom of expression and thought required for this must be constitutionally guaranteed.

The second dimension is the reorganisation of social existence in accordance with its mental world. How is society to be reorganised in accordance with the intellectual world of a nation that is shared commonly? Democratic autonomy lies at the heart of the reorganisation of this physical existence. It is possible to define democratic autonomy in both a broad and narrow sense. In the broadest sense, democratic autonomy is the expression of the democratic nation. The democratic nation has dimensions divided across a wider range. It can be defined in terms of its cultural, economic, social, legal, diplomatic and other dimensions. In the narrow sense, democratic autonomy represents the political dimension; in other words, it means democratic authority or governance. The democratic autonomy dimension of becoming a democratic nation is much more problematic in terms of relations with sovereign nation-states. Sovereign nation-states generally reject democratic autonomy. They do not wish to recognise it as a right unless they are obliged to do so. With regard to the Kurds, the acceptance of democratic autonomy lies at the heart of a reconciliation with nation-states. Democratic autonomy is the minimum requirement to live under the common political roof of a nation-state with a dominant ethnicity. Anything less would lead to an increase in conflict and a worsening of the situation – not a solution. Especially lately, there has been an effort to implement the liberal 'individual and cultural rights' project – originally developed by English capitalism in order to rule their working class and colonies – in the Republic of Turkey via Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (the Justice and Development Party). This project, which is alien to Middle Eastern culture, will only serve to expand the conflict. Democratic autonomy

is the most suitable solution for the nation-state. Anything less would only fuel further conflict and war.

5.2 The Democratic Autonomy Solution and its Implementation

The democratic autonomy solution can be implemented in two ways.

The first is predicated on finding a compromise with nation-states. It finds its concrete expression in a democratic constitutional solution. It respects the historical-societal heritage of peoples and cultures. It regards the freedom of expression and organisation of these heritages as irrevocable and fundamental constitutional rights. Democratic autonomy is the fundamental principle of these rights. The foremost conditions of this arrangement are that the sovereign nation-state renounces all denial and annihilation policies, and the oppressed nation abandons the idea of forming its own nation-state. It is difficult for a democratic autonomy project to be implemented without both nations renouncing statist tendencies in this regard. EU countries took more than 300 years of nation-state experience before they could accept democratic autonomy as the best solution for solving nation-states' regional, national and minority-related problems.

In the solution to the Kurdish question, too, the path that is meaningful and consistent is the one that does not rely on separatism and violence and that accepts democratic autonomy. All other paths will either lead to a delay in addressing problems, and therefore to a deepening of the impasse, or to violent conflict and separation. The history of national problems is littered with such examples. The relative peace, wealth and prosperity of the EU countries – the home of national conflicts – during the past 60 years was achieved due to their acceptance of democratic autonomy and their ability to find

flexible and creative solutions to regional, national and minority problems. The opposite has been true of the Republic of Turkey. The nation-statism that it was hoped would be completed through the denial and annihilation of the Kurds has drawn Turkey to the brink of disintegration, with continuous crises, regular military coups and a special warfare regime that is conducted together with Gladio. Only when the Turkish nation-state abandons these policies, and accepts the democratic autonomy of all cultures (including Turkish and Turkmens), and specifically the Kurdish cultural entity's democratic autonomy, will it achieve lasting peace and prosperity as a normal, lawful, secular and democratic republic.

The second path for a democratic autonomy solution – one that does not depend on finding a compromise with nation-states – is to implement its own project unilaterally. In a broad sense, this path recognises the Kurdish people's right to become a democratic nation through the implementation of democratic autonomy. It goes without saying that in this case conflicts will intensify with those sovereign nation-states who do not accept this unilateral implementation of becoming a democratic nation. If this happens, the Kurds will have no other choice but to adopt a full-scale mobilisation and war position in order to protect their existence and to live freely against the individual or joint attacks of nation-states (Iran, Syria and Turkey). They will not hold back from becoming a democratic nation with all its dimensions and to develop and realise their aspirations through their own efforts until they either reach a compromise or achieve independence amid the warfare.

5.3 The KCK and the Dimensions of Becoming a Democratic Nation

In light of these general definitions of the nation, the KCK rejects state nationist approaches and bases itself on the demo-

cratic nationist model, acknowledging the Kurdish people's right to become a nation and to achieve their transformation into a national society through democratic autonomy.

If we liken societies, especially the democratic nations of our era, to a living organism, then we can say that all its parts and dimensions are interconnected and coexist as in the integral whole of a live organism. Therefore, although each and every dimension is discussed in their own right, they must always be considered as parts of a whole.

1 – The Free Individual-Citizen and Democratic Communal Life

The individual-citizen of a democratic nation has to be communal as well as free. The allegedly free individual of capitalist individualism, who has been provoked into being at odds with society, essentially lives a life of abject slavery. However, liberal ideology creates an image where the individual apparently possesses limitless freedom. In reality the individual, enslaved by waged labour, represents the most developed form of slavery. This type of individual is produced through the relentless education of, and life in, nation-statism. Because his or her life is bound to the sovereignty of money, the wage system, in effect like a dog's leash, ensures that the individual can be manipulated as desired: he or she has no other means of surviving. If they seek to escape – that is, if they opt for unemployment – it is in effect a death sentence. Moreover, capitalist individualism has been shaped on the basis of society's denial. The individual thinks that they can only realise themself insofar as they reject the culture and traditions of historical society. This is the biggest distortion of liberal ideology. Its principal slogan is 'there is no society, there is only the individual'.

As opposed to this, the democratic nation's individual sees his or her freedom in the communality of society, in the

form of the more functional life of small communities. A free and democratic commune or community is the main school in which the individual in a democratic nation takes shape. Without a commune or communal life, the individual cannot be fully realised. Communes are diverse and valid in every sphere of societal life. In accordance with their diversity, individuals can exist in more than one commune or community. The important thing is for the individual to know how to live in a communal community in accordance with his or her talents, labour and diversity. The individual considers the responsibility towards the commune or the social units to which they are attached to be their guiding moral principle. Morality means respect and commitment to the community and to communal life. The commune or community in turn protects the individual and enhances his or her life. After all, the fundamental principle behind the founding of human society is this very principle of moral responsibility. The democratic character of the commune or communities is what realises the collective freedom – in other words, the political commune or community. A commune or community that is not democratic cannot be political. A commune or community that is not political therefore cannot be free. There is a close correlation between the political and democratic character of the commune and its freedom.

The definition of the democratic nation's individual-citizen becomes slightly broader when he or she lives under the same political roof as a nation-state. In this case, within the framework of 'constitutional citizenship', she is as much an individual-citizen of the nation-state as she is of the democratic nation. The point here is the recognition of the status of the democratic nation, whereby democratic autonomy is acknowledged to have legal status in the national constitution. Democratic national status is twofold. First, it denotes the sta-

tus, law and constitution of democratic autonomy. Second, autonomy is incorporated as a subsection of the national constitutional status.

Although the unilateral construction of a democratic nation based on the free individual-citizen and the communal unity of the KCK is a priority, it is also possible for the KCK to arrive at an agreement with those sovereign nation-states who acknowledge the status of democratic autonomy within the national democratic constitution. The KCK recognises both the life of the free individual-citizen and community and the extent to which this life is bound by a legal and constitutional status.

Capitalist individualism requires absolute servitude to the nation-state god, whereas democratic nation citizenship fosters the development of the free individual in the truest sense. The democratic nation citizenship of the Kurds can be realised under the KCK status. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to define membership of the KCK as being democratic nation citizenship. It is an irrevocable right and duty for the Kurdish people to be citizens of their own democratic nation. To be unable to be a citizen of one's own nation is a huge alienation and is indefensible.

2 – Political Life and Democratic Autonomy

It is possible to define the school of social sciences that studies the ontology and development of societal nature on the basis of moral and political society as the 'democratic civilisation system school'. Determining moral and political society to be our fundamental unit is also important, as this comprises the dimensions of historicity and integrality. Moral and political society is the most historical and holistic narrative of society. Morality and politics can be seen as history itself. A society with a moral and political dimension is a society that is in harmony with its

existence and development. Society can exist without exploitation, classes, cities, power, nation and the state, but a society devoid of morals and politics is unthinkable.

A moral and political society is a democratic society. Democracy can only attain meaning on the basis of the existence of an open and free society; that is, a moral and political society. Democratic society, where individuals and groups become subjects, corresponds with a form of governance that most effectively develops moral and political society. More precisely, the functionality of political society is what we already call democracy. Politics and democracy, in the true sense, are identical concepts. If freedom is the arena in which politics expresses itself, then democracy is the modus operandi of politics within that arena. The trio of freedom, politics and democracy cannot be devoid of a moral base. We can also define morals as the institutionalised or traditional form of freedom, politics and democracy.

Moral and political societies are in dialectical contradiction with the state, which is the official expression of all forms of capital, ownership and power. The state constantly desires to replace morals with law, and politics with bureaucratic administration. On the twin poles of this historical contradiction, the official state civilisation and the unofficial democratic civilisation coexist. Two separate typologies of meaning emerge. The contradictions can either intensify and lead to war, or reconcile and lead to peace.

Today, the problematic nature of nation-states is propelling political societies and their governing forces towards becoming democratic nations, either through reform or revolution. While nation-states were the dominant tendency during the rise of capitalism, under the current conditions of its downfall the dominant tendency is to evolve towards becoming democratic nations. In this regard, it is important not to equate po-

litical force with state power. Politics cannot be equated with power and its institutionalised form, the state. Freedom is in the nature of politics. Politicised societies and nations are societies and nations that are becoming free.

Politics not only liberates, it also regulates. Politics is a unique regulatory force; is a kind of art. It represents the opposite of the suppressive regulations of states and rulers. The stronger the politics in a society or nation, the weaker the state and ruling powers. The opposite is also true: the stronger the state or ruling power is in a society or nation, the weaker the politics – and hence freedom – in that society.

Just as a society or nation that gains state and ruling power does not become free even if there were any democratic features, it also faces the prospect of losing whatever freedoms it previously had. This is why the more we remove state and power from society, the more we open it up to freedom. And the fundamental condition that is necessary for liberating that society and nation is for it to maintain itself in a permanent political position.

It will be seen that the democratic civilisation system has always existed and sustained itself as the other face of official civilisation's history, in essence as the moral and political unity of societal nature. Despite suppression and exploitation by the official world system, the other face of society could not be eliminated. In any case, its destruction is not possible. Just as capitalism cannot exist without a non-capitalist society, civilisation as the official world system cannot exist without the existence of the democratic civilisation system. More concretely, the civilisation with monopoly could not exist without the civilisation with no monopoly. The opposite of this is not true. In other words, democratic civilisation, the historical flow of moral and political society, could exist quite comfortably and be more free from obstruction without official civilisation. I

define democratic civilisation as a thought system and accumulation of thought, as well as a totality of moral rules and political organs.

We conceptualised the political dimension of the KCK's construction of the democratic nation as democratic autonomy. Without self-governance the democratic nation is unthinkable. In general, all forms of nations, and particularly democratic nations, are societal entities that have their own self-governance. If a society is deprived of self-governance, it ceases to be a nation. The Kurds were not only prevented from becoming a nation, they also ceased to exist as a society. The guidance by the PKK and the policies of the KCK not only stopped this process, but also initiated the process of becoming a democratic nation rather than a political society. Kurds, at their current stage, are not only a society that has become intensely political, but a society that also works to transform this political reality into a democratic nation.

The KCK plays a key role in the construction of the democratic nation and may be translated as the equivalent of democratic autonomy. The KCK's fulfilment of its role as the organ for democratic politics is indispensable in the creation of a democratic nation. To confuse it with a nation-state is a deliberate distortion. The KCK, as a principle, has ceased to employ nation-statism as a tool for finding a solution. It is neither the first nor the last stage of nation-statism. They are both qualitatively different concepts of authority. Although it may contain features that are reminiscent of the nation-states' institutionalisation in terms of its organisational structure, it is quintessentially different. KONGRA-GEL, as the KCK's decision-making body, means People's Assembly. Its importance is derived from people making their own decisions themselves. The People's Assembly is a democratic organ. It is the alternative to becoming a nation governed by the upper classes or

the bourgeoisie. KONGRA-GEL signifies becoming a nation governed by the popular classes and stratum of intellectuals. It is essentially different from the bourgeois parliamentarian system. The Executive Council of the KCK expresses the condensed and centralised daily administration pyramid. It ensures coordination between the working units scattered among the people. It coordinates the daily organisational-operational work involved in becoming a democratic nation as well as governing and defending it. The Council should not be confused with government organs of the state. It is closer to the system of confederations of democratic civil societies. The KCK's General Presidential Institution, resting on election by the people, is the most general and highest level of representation. It supervises and monitors the compatibility between all the KCK's units and the application of fundamental policies.

It is clear that during such a period and under new conditions there will be considerable competition, contention and conflict between the nation-states' institutions and forces and the KCK's institutions and forces. There will be different authorities and governances in the cities and rural areas.

3 – Social Life

In the process of becoming a democratic nation, important transformations occur in social life. Traditional life in capitalist modernity undergoes great changes.

The dominant modern lifestyle has turned into a complete trap based around the oldest slave, the woman. In capitalism, women have been turned into the 'queens of commodity'. They are not only unwaged workers, as 'housewives', they are the lowest wage earners outsides of the house and the main tool for lowering wages.

The woman is the foremost constituent of flexible employment. She is an industrial incubator producing the new gen-

erations required by the capitalist system. She is the principal tool for the advertising industry. Her servitude perpetuates sexism. From the global to the little emperor in the family, she is the instrument of unlimited pleasure and power of all dominant men. She is the object that gives birth to the power of those who never had power. At no point in history has the woman been exploited as much as she has been during capitalist modernity. All other slaveries – child and male slavery – have developed in the footsteps of women's enslavement. This is why in the social life imposed by capitalism everyone, except for those who rule, has been infantilised as much as enslaved. The family, which is shaped around the woman and is the oldest institution of society, is disintegrating yet again around the woman. What disintegrates the family is capitalism's manner of accumulation. This manner can only materialise itself as it consumes society, and the expected result is that society can be consumed and atomised in so far as it is able to destroy the fundamental cell of the society: the family.

No matter how much the field of medicine develops, it is unable to stop the rapid spread of disease within society. Nationalism, religionism, powerism and sexism are the cognitive and emotional DNA of capitalism, constantly generating diseases both individually and institutionally. The increasing number of inherent illnesses is an indicator of mental and psychological disease – the inevitable outcome of capitalism's destructive effect on society.

In modern social life, the education system is responsible for the creation of the anti-social individual. Both the liberal individualist life and the life of the nation-statist citizen are programmed and implemented in accordance with the requirements of capitalism. For this purpose, a huge industry called the education sector has been formed. In this sector, individuals are bombarded 24 hours a day both mentally and spiritu-

ally in order to be turned into anti-social beings. They are prevented from becoming moral and political. They are turned into individuals who are compelled to consume, who run after money, are sexist, chauvinist and lickspittle. This is how social nature is destroyed. Education is not used to enhance the healthy functioning of society, but to destroy it.

A democratic nation is above all adamant about remaining a society; it stands against capitalist modernity with the slogan 'society or nothing'. It insists on the sustenance of society as a historical-social reality, although the society is dissolved within the grindstones of modernity.

Because the democratic nation's understanding of education targets sociality and the free individual-citizen, the dialectic of the development of the individual with the society and society's development with the individual is re-established. The socialising, liberating and equalising role of the sciences is reaffirmed. Democratic nation is the nationhood of a society that has acquired a true awareness of its existence.

4 – Free Partner Life

We know that there are three main functions for all living organisms: nutrition, self-preservation and preservation of the species. These fundamental functions take on a new level in humans.

Once the consciousness of the desire to live is attained, it should also be understood that through procreation alone one can not grasp the meaning of life. Just as reproduction does not make life meaningful, it might even distort and weaken the emergent power of consciousness. Having awareness of one's own self is undoubtedly an amazing thing to happen in the universe. Ascribing divinity to human beings was not in vain. Continuing the bloodline of the conscious human not only impairs the balance, to the detriment of other living be-

ings, it also endangers humanity's power of consciousness. In short, the main problem of the conscious human cannot be the continuation of its bloodline. If, as far as we know, the universe has achieved the highest level of power – to know itself within the human being for the very first time – then this is something worth getting excited about. Maybe understanding the universe is the true meaning of life. This, in turn, would mean that the life–death cycle has been transcended; there could be no greater source of excitement and rejoicing for humanity.

The most important result of the PKK's revolutionary people's war in relation to male chauvinism is its understanding that the liberation and freedom of society is only possible through the analysis of the phenomenon of woman, as well as her liberation and freedom. However, as has been pointed out, the Kurdish male mistakenly defines his so-called honour in terms of his absolute sovereignty over women. This egregious contradiction needs to be resolved.

On the way to building a democratic nation, we will have to do the opposite of what has been done to date in the name of honour. I am talking about a transformed Kurdish manhood, and in part I am talking about myself. It should be done like this: we must abandon any notion of ownership in relation to women. Woman should only belong to herself (xwebûn). She should know that she has no owner, and that the only owner she has is herself. We should not be attached to women with any emotions of subordination, including love and blind love. Likewise, the woman too should stop herself from being dependent and owned. This should be the first condition of being a revolutionary, a militant. Those who come through this experience successfully, are those who realise freedom in their personality, and who can build the new society and democratic nation starting with their own liberated personalities.

The liberation of women is very important in the process of becoming a democratic nation. The liberation of women is the liberation of society. The society that becomes free, on the other hand, is democratic nation. I talked about the revolutionary significance of reversing the role of the man. This means, instead of approaching the woman as a means of continuing his bloodline or dominating her, he should sustain the process of becoming a democratic nation through his own strength – he should form the ideological and organisational power needed for this, and should ensure the sovereignty of his own political authority; thus he should ideologically and politically produce himself. Therefore, rather than physical reproduction, he must ensure spiritual and intellectual empowerment. Capitalist modernity is a system based on the denial of love. The denial of society, the uncontrollability of individualism, pervasive sexism, the deification of money, the substitution of nation-state for God and the transformation of women into unwaged or low-paid workers also mean denial of the material basis of love.

The female nature must be understood clearly. To approach a woman's sexuality solely by finding her biologically attractive, and to relate to her on this basis, is the loss of love from the very beginning. Just as we don't call the biological mating of other species love, we cannot call biologically based sexual intercourse between humans love either. We can call this the normal breeding activity of living beings. There is no need to be human to conduct these activities. Those who want true love have to abandon this animal-human type of reproduction. We can see women as valuable friends and comrades only to the extent that we transcend viewing them as objects of sexual appeal. The most difficult relationship is one of friendship and camaraderie with a woman that transcends sexism. Even when life is freely shared with a woman as a partner, the building of

society and democratic nation should form its basis. We must overcome the traditional boundaries, and as in modernity, of seeing women only in the roles of partners, mothers, sisters or lovers. First and foremost, we must forge strong human relationships based on a common understanding and the building of society. If a man wants to have a relationship with a woman that has a strong ideological and societal foundation, then he needs to leave the choice and the courting to the woman. The more a woman's level of freedom, ability to choose freely, and mobility based on her own strength have developed, the more one can live with her meaningfully and beautifully.

We continuously emphasise that the conditions under which jin and jiyan cease to be woman and life reflect the collapse and disintegration of the society. Without this reality being understood and acted on, it is impossible for those components that we call revolution, revolutionary party, guides and militants to play their role. It is impossible for those who are themselves in a deadlock to solve other peoples' deadlocks and to make them free. The most important consequence of the PKK and its revolutionary people's warfare in this regard is that the liberation and freedom of society can only be achieved through the analysis of the phenomenon of woman, and her liberation and freedom.

5 – Economic Autonomy

The nation-state is the instrument with which capitalist modernity establishes its control over an economy that rests on realising maximum profits. Without this instrument, maximising profits and capital accumulation cannot be achieved. It represents the highest level of economic plunder, while maintaining a certain amount of legitimacy, in the history of civilisation. A correct definition of the nation-state cannot be made without analysing its relationship to maximising profits and

capital accumulation. The nation-state cannot be defined solely as a system of tyranny and power either. Only when state power is organised as a nation-state can capitalist modernity and, in particular, its maximum profit and capital accumulation over the economy be realised. This means that the nation-state's control over the economic life of society has allowed the state to seize more surplus value than ever. It is coated with the varnish of nationalism and patriotism, deified through education, and it penetrates society completely to legitimise the economic extortion it has perpetrated. Concepts, theories and institutions developed in the fields of law, political economy and diplomacy all pursue legitimacy with the same objective. The enforcement of a relentless terror, together with the attainment of maximum profit, on the one hand condemns society to minimum waged labour, while on the other hand it transforms the majority into an army of the unemployed. Low-wage slavery and an enormous army of the unemployed are the natural consequences of the drive to maximise profits, the nation-state and industrialism.

The realisation of these three fundamental components of capitalist modernity is only made possible when society loses control and the freedom to make choices over its economic life, and is condemned to waged slavery, with the majority of the population transformed into an army of the unemployed, and women condemned to unpaid or low-wage slavery. Capitalism's social sciences in general, and in particular its political economy, are mythologies concocted to conceal and distort these facts; one must never believe them and must know what these myths entail.

Kurdish society is a society that has been frightened to stand up for itself as a consequence of the cultural genocide it has endured through conquests, occupations, invasions, looting, colonialism and assimilation, as well as the consequences of

capitalist modernity. It is a society that has lost control over its own economy and has been taken under the complete control of the three-legged modern monster of foreign and collaborationist elements. The fact that it only works to feed itself shows that it is a society that has been tied down to genocidal intent. It is a society in which women, the creators of economy, are rendered unemployed and their labour considered of least value. It is a society whose men have been scattered across the world in search of work in order to support their families. It is a society in which people kill each other for a chicken or a plot of land. Clearly, such a society has ceased to be a society and is one that has crumbled and dissolved.

Economic occupation is the most dangerous of all occupations. It is the most barbaric way to degrade and destroy a society. More than the suppression and tyranny of the nation-state, Kurdish society has been eviscerated by the loss of its economic tools and of control over its economic domain. It is not possible for a society to maintain its freedom once it has lost control over its means of production and its market. The Kurds have not only effectively lost control over their means and relations of production; they have also lost control over their production, consumption and trade. More precisely, it was only possible for them to make use of their property, and partake in trade and industry, in so far as they attached themselves to sovereign nation-states through relinquishing their identities. Economic captivity was an effective tool in the denial of identity and loss of freedom. The unilateral enterprises established over the rivers and oil reservoirs have not only destroyed ancient cultural artefacts but also much fertile land. The intensification of economic colonialism which came after political and cultural colonisation was the final nail in the coffin. The final point arrived at is: ‘either cease to be a society, or die!’

The economic system of a democratic nation not only puts a stop to these barbaric practices, it bases itself on society re-establishing control over its own economy.

Economic autonomy is the minimum compromise to be reached between the nation-state and democratic nation; any lesser compromise is a mandate for surrender and annihilation. The furthering of economic autonomy to independence would mean establishing an opposing nation-state, which is ultimately surrendering to capitalist modernity. Relinquishing economic autonomy, on the other hand, would mean surrendering to the dominant nation-state. The essence of economic autonomy predicates neither private capitalism nor state capitalism. It is predicated on ecological industry and communal economy – the form where democracy is reflected in the economy. Industry, development, technology, businesses and ownership are bound by the principle of being an ecological and democratic society. In economic autonomy there is no room for industry, technology, development, ownership or rural-urban settlement that negate ecological and democratic society. The economy cannot be left as a domain where profit and capital accumulation materialises.

Economic autonomy is a model in which profit and capital accumulation is minimised. Although it does not reject the market, trade, product variety, competition and productivity, it does, however, reject the dominance of profit and capital accumulation. Finance and financial systems are validated only insofar as they serve economic productivity and functionality. Making money from money is regarded as the most effortless form of exploitation, which has no place in economic autonomy. The economic autonomy of a democratic nation does not regard work as drudgery, but as an act of liberation. To see work as drudgery is to be alienated from the results of labour. When the results of labour serve one's own identity and the

individual's freedom, the situation changes for the better. This isn't the same as real socialism's efforts towards collectivisation. In the commune, there is no place for drudgery or for work and labour that are not liberating.

The dams built on Kurdistan's rivers have led to historical genocide and ecological disaster. No dam that ignores ecology, fertile land or history can be permitted; even those that have already been built will not be replaced when they decay. If possible, early elimination should not be avoided. Opposition to deforestation and erosion – the biggest enemy of society and life – chimes with the spirit of total mobilisation. It declares the protection of land and reforestation to be the most valuable forms of labour.

The KCK, as the backbone of the democratic nation, predicates itself on and sees economic autonomy and communal economy as essential to the self-defence of society. Just as society cannot sustain itself without self-defence, the nourishment and sustenance of society is only possible with economic autonomy, dependent on soil conservation and reforestation, ecology and commune.

Economic autonomy also requires a legal basis. The uniformity and centralism of the laws of the sovereign nation-state hamper economic creativity, the environment and competition under the pretext of unity. In place of such an understanding of law based on economic colonialism, there is an urgent need for a localised economy that functions autonomously but which takes into account coordination with the national economy. An economic law that makes allowance for local market dynamics, but which does not deny the national market, is crucial. A single, central legal system is the most important factor underpinning conservatism. It is completely political and makes no economic sense.

6 – Legal Structure

Democratic law is a law based on diversity. More importantly, it makes little reference to legal regulation and is a simple construct. Throughout history, the sovereign nation-state is a state form that has developed legal regulations to the greatest extent, in order to eliminate moral and political society. Past societies largely attempted to solve their problems through moral and political regulations. Capitalist modernity has attempted to base all of its legitimacy on law. Capitalist modernity's excessive intervention in and exploitation of society led it to resort to a complicated tool called law that formalised justice.

Law, rather than consisting of laws regulating the rights and duties of individuals and society, as it is so often claimed to be, is the art of ruling through excessive regulation intended to legitimise the injustices caused by capitalism. Ruling through laws rather than moral and political rules is specific to capitalist modernity. Rejecting morals and politics, the bourgeoisie resorts to the instrument of law, which gives it enormous power. In the hands of the bourgeoisie, law is a powerful weapon. It defends itself through law against both the former moral and political order and the workers. The power of the nation-state is largely derived from the power of a legal system that has been unilaterally regulated. The laws, in a sense, are the verses of the nation-state god. It prefers to rule its society through these verses.

It is for this reason that the democratic nation is sensitive towards law, especially constitutional law. The democratic nation is more of a moral and political nation than a nation based on law. The need for law arises if a life with nation-states under a common political roof and compromise is opted for. When this happens, the distinction between national law and the laws of local government gains importance. When the na-

tion-state laws, which are based on unilaterally centralised bureaucratic interests, constantly face the resistance of local and cultural democratic groups they must embrace the laws of the local government.

Due to the fact that the existence of Kurdistan and the Kurds has been denied, the Kurds have no laws specific to them. During the Ottoman period, the Kurds had both written and traditional laws. From 1925 onwards, Kurdish identity was regarded as non-existent, to be wiped from history through conspiracies, coups and assimilation. While the PKK's resistance has re-established the existence of the Kurds, it has not yet been able to ensure a legal definition. The KCK will work to persuade nation-states to recognise the Kurdish entity legally, but if this does not happen it will unilaterally develop its own autonomous legal system. However, the KCK will prioritise finding a place for itself within other national constitutions, working to express its democratic autonomy status within them. This is what is meant by a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish question: national democratic constitutional compromise based on democratic autonomy status. If the KCK does not succeed in its preferred national democratic constitutional solution with democratic autonomy status based on a compromise, it will make the transition to unilateral democratic autonomous governance as its second preferred option. The democratic autonomous governance in Kurdistan is not a nation-state with governance through laws. It is the governance of democratic modernity on a local and regional scale.

7 – Culture

The state rests on thousands of years of patriarchal culture. The state institution is a male invention, where wars with the objective of pillaging and looting have almost become a form of

production. Instead of woman's social effectivity based on production, a transition to man's social effectivity based on wars and booty occurred. There is a close correlation between the enslavement of women and warrior society culture. War does not produce, it seizes and pillages. Although in certain specific circumstances violence has played a decisive role in societal development – clearing the path to freedom, and resisting occupation, invasion and colonialism – it is largely destructive and negative. The internalised culture of violence in a society is also fuelled by wars. The sword of war among states and the hand of man within the family both epitomise domination.

In addition, by formalising the cultural norms of a dominant ethnicity or a religious community under the name of national culture, capitalist modernity declares war against all other cultural entities. By claiming that religions, ethnicities, peoples, nations, languages and cultures that have preserved themselves for thousands of years 'harm national unity', capitalist modernity prepares to destroy them either by force or through material incentives. In no other time in history have so many languages, religions, denominations, ethnic tribes and aşiret (a federation of tribal communities), as well as peoples and nations, fallen victim to these policies, or to be more precise, genocides. Physical genocides are actually a drop in the ocean when compared with immaterial genocide. Cultural and linguistic values together with communities that have existed for thousands of years are sacrificed, for the sake of the sacred act of creating 'national unity'.

The cultural dimension, too, is important in the formation of nations. In a narrow sense, culture represents the traditional mentality and emotional reality of a society. Again, in a narrow sense, religion, philosophy, mythology, science and various art forms constitute the culture of a society. In a way, they represent the mindset and mental state of a society. In a

nation-state, or as nations are formed by the state, the world of culture is greatly distorted and decimated. This is because in no other way can the state legitimise its rule of maximum profit and capital accumulation. Modernity and the nation-state cannot develop without first reconstructing culture and history according to their own interests. The resulting reality of modernity and the nation-state has no relation to the reality of history and culture; it represents a different meaning in terms of the truth.

The role of culture in capitalist modernity is vital. Culture, as the total mentality of all social spheres, is first subjected to assimilation (to accommodate economic and political hegemony), then it is turned into an industry to be spread extensively and intensively to all societies (nations, peoples, nation-states, civil society, corporations) of the world. The industrialisation of culture is the second most effective means of enslavement. Culture, in a narrow sense, represents the mindset of societies. Thought, taste and morals are its three fundamental issues. It has taken centuries for political and economic power to besiege and buy off cultural elements. They have regarded the appropriation of cultural elements as indispensable for their legitimacy throughout civilisational history. Economic and ruling powers were quick to notice this and to take precautions. The assimilation of culture by rulers dates back to the inception of hierarchy. It is the essential tool for ruling. Without cultural hegemony, economic and power monopolies cannot rule. The empire stage of capitalism is only possible with a developed cultural industry. It is for this reason that the struggle against cultural hegemony requires constant diligence.

In contrast, democratic society, moral and political society's contemporary form of modernity, is a society that truly accommodates difference in the broadest sense. All social groups within democratic society can coexist on the basis of

differences that form around their own culture and identity without being confined to a uniform culture and citizenship. Communities can reveal their potential in these differences, whether they are political or in terms of identity, and transform it into an active life. None of the communities have any concern that they would be homogenised. Uniformity is seen as deformity, poverty-stricken and boring. Pluriformity, however, offers richness, beauty and tolerance. Freedom and equality flourish under these conditions. Only equality and freedom that rest on diversity are valuable. As a matter of fact, freedom and equality attained via the nation-states is only for monopolies, as proven around the world. Power and capital monopolies never allow true freedoms or equality. Freedom and equality can only be acquired through the democratic politics of democratic society, and protected with self-defence.

Just as it is possible to bring together different ethnic cultures within the scope of the democratic nation, it is also important to utilise the democratic content of religious culture within the democratic nation as a free, equal and democratic component, and allow room for it in a resolution. The reconciliatory alliance approach developed by democratic modernity towards all anti-systemic movements should also be developed towards religious culture with democratic content; this is within the scope of another task that is of vital importance. The democratic nation tries to compose itself by reinstating the true meaning of history and culture, which in the process is reborn in the formation of the democratic nation.

The democratic nation solution to the Kurdish question is first and foremost linked to the correct definition of Kurdish history and culture. The correct definition of its history and culture will bring recognition of its social existence. The denial and annihilation of the Kurds in the Republic of Turkey's history began with the denial of Kurdish history and the an-

nihilation of its cultural heritage, first eliminating its immaterial culture and then its material culture. It is for this reason that it was right for the PKK to begin building with an awareness of history and culture. By attempting to explain Kurdish history and culture through comparison with other people's history and culture around the world, and to proclaim it in a manifesto called *The Path of the Kurdistan Revolution*, allowed the PKK to play the role of a revolutionary renaissance in the reinvigoration of Kurdish history and culture.

The construction of the Kurdish democratic nation is qualitatively different from nationalist and statist nation-building processes. It is different from sovereign nation-state nationalism and Kurdish nationalist and statist approaches; it is an alternative construction of a nation grounded on the history and culture of workers and peoples.

The Kurdish democratic nation will gradually acquire a further structural quality under the KCK, and present a new praxis of nation construction that will become a model for the Middle Eastern peoples. It is open to more extensive democratic national unions and alliances with other peoples on the basis of an open-ended understanding of democratic nationhood. It will initiate the rise of a new era, the era of democratic modernity, through the revolutionary and democratic nation renaissance against the cultural and historical denialism of nation-states that cannot transcend their role as agents of Western modernity.

8 – Self-Defence System

All species of living organisms have defence systems of their own. There is not a single defenceless species. As a matter of fact, it is possible to interpret the resistance shown by each element or particle in the universe to protect its existence as self-defence.

The same system is more than valid for the human species and their societies. Defence in humans is as much social as it is biological. Biological defence is performed by the defensive instincts of every living organism. In societal defence, however, all the individuals of the community collectively defend themselves. Moreover, the number of communities and their organisational form constantly change according to the means of defence. Defence is an essential function of society. Life cannot be sustained without it.

Another important conclusion we can draw from the self-defence mechanisms of living organisms is that this defence is only intended for the protection of their existence. They do not establish dominance and colonisation systems over their own species or any other species. Systems of domination and exploitation were first developed by the human species. The mental development of the human species that resulted in possibilities of exploitation, and in connection with this the attainment of surplus product, plays a role here. This situation leads to human beings protecting their existence along with defending the values of labour – in other words, social wars.

When we view things from the democratic society perspective, we must underline the following: when we talk about self-defence rather than a military stance or an armed organisation what we mean is the organisation of society to protect itself in every sphere, and for it to struggle based on these organisations. This said, in order to counter the attacks from the statist system against society and to protect society, military organisations may also be needed to defend society in all its diversity. This could be deemed as legitimate defence. But this sort of military organisation, organised in this way, serving to protect society and its reorganisation, cannot merely be evaluated as a military organisation. The function of the military forces at the service of society, the fundamental self-defence forces, is

to play the role of a catalyst to speed up and protect the struggle of democratic society. Military forces that move away from these functions cannot avoid being transformed into offensive forces that are instruments of hegemonic tendencies.

Self-defence does not only stipulate an armed structure; although it does not reject the use of force when necessary, it cannot be viewed only as an armed structure. It represents the organisation of society in all spheres and in relation to its own identity and life: the decisions taken to this end reflect society's own will and are implemented at society's behest. Values that used to belong to the people and the country but were usurped by colonialist powers are retrieved and returned to social values in an act of self-defence. Society should attain a position where it can both protect its values and recover its usurped rights in order for it to govern itself. This is the way to create a democratic nation.

A self-defence mechanism for women, as the most oppressed and suppressed segment of society, is also of vital importance. Under the patriarchal system all rights of women were usurped. Women can circumvent these policies of degradation, harassment, rape and slaughter through the formation of their own self-defence mechanisms. For this reason, they need to learn their history, create their own organisations and institutions, carve out space for themselves in all areas of life and if necessary create their own military forces.

An important and indispensable heading within the KCK's programme for the construction of a democratic nation is how self-defence is going to be tied to a permanent, systematic mechanism. The nation-states, the sole armed monopolies, will be unsparing if they have the opportunity to implement new policies of denial, annihilation and assimilation. These policies have compelled the creation of a permanent self-defence system by the KCK. The minimum requirement

for coexistence with nation-states is for Kurdish identity and existence to be constitutionally guaranteed. Constitutional guarantee is not enough: concrete grounds for this guarantee should be sought through statuses determined by law. Apart from the joint national defence for external threats, Kurdish society should meet its own security requirements. This is because a society can only ensure its internal security in accordance with its requirements. Therefore, the related nation-states (the centralised nation-states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria) must implement important reforms of their own internal security policies.

If a compromise cannot be agreed with the relevant nation-states, the KCK, on the basis of protecting the unilateral construction of the democratic nation with all its dimensions, should try to organise the quantitative and qualitative status of its own self-defence forces according to new needs.

9 – Diplomacy

One of the most developed activities by the nation-state is diplomacy between nation-states. Diplomacy describes pre-war activities between nation-states. It may even be defined as the preparatory phase for wars in the history of nation-states. Throughout history there have always been certain rituals of expressing neighbourhood relations between different types of communal units. These are deemed to be valuable. The reason nation-states have institutionalised this relationship can be linked to the profit tendency of capitalist modernity. If relationships are more profitable in times of peace then there is no need for war. Diplomacy serves to achieve profitable relations. If the maximum profit tendency is linked to war, then diplomatic forces will be unable to avert a profitable war, thus terminating the need for diplomacy. Diplomacy has been reduced to the logic of profit; it no longer has any link to the

meaningful intersocietal relations that have existed throughout history. Diplomacy has been degraded to a manipulative tool in the game of profitable wars between nation-states.

Democratic nation diplomacy must first create a common platform between Kurds who are fragmented and divided in various ways. All other diplomatic activities, especially those that each organisation wishes to develop on their own and according to their own interests, have done more harm than good and have served to fragment, create conflict and divide Kurds further. It is for this reason that establishing the Democratic National Congress is the most vital priority for Kurdish diplomacy. Diplomacy that rests on the Iraqi-Kurdish Federal State is important, but cannot meet the needs of all Kurdish people. This state has neither the ability to meet this demand nor the conditions that would allow it to do so. A diplomacy that meets the needs of all Kurds can be developed only through a Democratic National Congress. Therefore, the primary task is to assemble the Democratic National Congress and declare it to be a permanent general integrative national democratic organisation. It is clear that for some time to come, relations and contradictions both ideologically and politically will continue between the KCK as it builds a democratic nation and the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq's nation-statist construction. In this regard, the Democratic National Congress may serve as a solution-oriented umbrella organisation.

Diplomacy, which once again becomes a tool for peace and solidarity as well as creative exchanges between societies, deals essentially with solutions to problems. Democratic nation diplomacy is a tool for peace and beneficial relations, not wars. It signifies a mission where wise people play a role and which has high ethical and political values. It plays an important role in developing and maintaining bilaterally beneficial processes

and friendly relations, especially among neighbouring peoples and related communities. It is the constructive force of common socialities and the synthesis of societies at higher levels. The diplomacy of the democratic nation can play a lasting role and provide solutions in the context of democratic modernity between the peoples and nations of the Middle East who have endured chaos and conflict because of nation-state diplomacy. The global union of democratic nations, as an alternative to the UN, is the World Confederation of Democratic Nations. Continents and large cultural regions can form their own Confederations of Democratic Nations, too.

6. To Be a Seeker of a Democratic Nation Solution

The construction of a democratic nation in Kurdistan is the new historical and societal expression of Kurdish existence and its free life, which requires both theoretical and practical concentration and transformation. It represents a truth that requires devotion at the level of real love. Just as there is no room for false love on this voyage, there is also no room for uncommitted travellers. On this voyage, the question of when the construction of the democratic nation will be completed is a redundant one. This is a construction that will never be finished: it is an ongoing process. The construction of a democratic nation has the freedom to recreate itself at every instant. In societal terms, there can be no utopia or reality that is more ambitious than this. In accordance with their historical and societal reality, the Kurds have vigorously turned towards the construction of a democratic nation. As a matter of fact, they have lost nothing by ridding themselves of a nation-state god in which they never believed; they are free of a heavy burden, a burden that brought them to the brink of annihilation. Instead, they have gained the opportunity to become a democratic nation.

The Kurds, as individuals and as a society, must conceive, internalise and implement the construction of a democratic nation as the synthesis of all expressions of truth and resistance throughout their history, including the most ancient goddess beliefs, Zoroastrianism and Islam. The truths that all the past

mythological, religious and philosophical teachings, as well as contemporary social sciences, have tried to teach, and that all resistance wars and rebellions have individually and collectively tried to voice, are represented in the mind and body of constructing a democratic nation. It was this reality and its expression as truth that was my point of departure, not only when I periodically recreated myself, but especially on arriving at the present as I tried to recreate myself at almost every instant. In this way I have freely socialised myself, concretised this as a democratic nation (in a Kurdish context) and presented it as democratic modernity to all humanity, to the oppressed peoples and individuals of the Middle East.

It is clear that care needs to be taken in order to prevent liberalism – as it so often has done throughout its history – from degenerating and dissolving these positive tendencies of democratisation under its own ideological and material hegemony. The most strategic task is to unify not only all system opponents but also the flow of historical society, with all its urbanist, local and regional political formations in a new ideological and political structure. In this regard, intertwined with comprehensive theoretical work that needs to be taken up, there is a need to develop a programme and structures for organisation and action. The conditions are ripe in the twenty-first century to avoid the fate of confederal structures which were eliminated by the nation-states in the mid-nineteenth century, and to achieve the victory of democratic confederalism. In order for democratic modernity to come out of this deepest and longest lasting crisis, sustained only through crisis management during modernity's financial capital era, the ability to succeed in the intellectual, moral and political duties of reconstruction has never had such a vital significance.

7. Conclusion

If new parties standing for freedom and equality want to be consistent, then they must develop politics and social forms that are not centred around the state. The alternative to the state is democracy. All paths – aside from democracy – that have been attempted in efforts to counter the state have come to nothing. Contrary to popular belief, democracy is not a form of capitalist state. In addition, nothing other than democracy can restrict the state and keep it within the law. To topple a state doesn't mean you have overcome state culture. A new one can always be created to fill the vacuum. Only democracy shares the same area as the state; by restricting the state, it widens society's sphere of freedom. It can thus approach equality more closely by reducing the number of appropriated values.

Therefore, we can define democracy as the self-governance of a non-state society.

Democracy is governance that is not state; it is the power of communities to govern themselves without the state. Contrary to popular belief, since its formation human society has experienced democracy more than it has experienced the state. Perhaps the situation of a general country or nation's democracy has not been intensely experienced. But the emergence of society's existence is communal and democratic. Without communality, or in the absence of having a democratic reflex, it is impossible for a society to be solely ruled by the state. The

state can only rule by growing at the expense of communality and democracy. The grounds out of which the state rises and on which it thrives are the society's communality – the need for coexistence – and democratic stance. There is a dialectic relationship between the two. Therefore, when society and civilisation meet, the main contradiction is between the state and democracy. Less of one is more of the other. Full democracy is statelessness. Full state sovereignty is the denial of democracy. States can only be toppled by states; democracy does not topple the state, it can only pave the way for a newer state like real socialism did. Democracy's fundamental function becomes evident in this manner. It can only increase the opportunities for freedom and equality by restricting the state, making it smaller and by trimming its octopus-like tentacles and their power over society. Towards the end of the process, perhaps the state will become redundant and fizzle out. The conclusion we draw from this is that the relationship between the state and democracy is not of one toppling another, but of transcendence.

What I am trying to show with this short analysis is that the PKK's worldview has contained a fundamental mistake from the beginning it being a state-oriented party. These parties, whether they form a state or not, cannot achieve their objectives of democracy, freedom and equality through state formation. Without deviating from this path, one cannot become a new libertarian and egalitarian party. In short, the way to become a democratic and socialist party is to ensure renewal by making the transition from a state-oriented theory, programme, strategy and tactics. There is a need for a non-state-oriented democratic socialist theory, programme, strategy and tactics. If self-criticism develops within this context, it will be meaningful. Otherwise, the old methods will persist under the guise of the new. The state of real socialism, social

democracy and national liberation parties is enough to prove this reality.

Just as it has been the case many times throughout history between civilisational forces and democratic forces, capitalist modernity forces and democratic modernity forces can accept the existence and identity of one another, and can coexist peacefully on the basis of recognising democratic autonomous governances. Within this scope and under these conditions, within and outside the borders of a nation-state, democratic confederal political formations can peacefully coexist with nation-state formations.

I have tried to puzzle out and comprehensively analyse the proposition that while capitalist modernity survives on the basis of capitalism, industrialism and nation-statism, democratic modernity can only come into existence through democratic communality, ecological industry and a democratic nation. I have defined democratic communality not as the egalitarianism of a homogeneous society, but as any type of community (from women's to men's communities, from sports and arts to industry, from intellectuals to shepherds, from tribes to corporations, from families to nations, from villages to cities, from localities to universality, and from clan to any type of global society) of any size. I defined eco-industrial communities as communities in which the eco-industrial society, the agricultural society of villages and the industrial society of the cities nurture each other and are strictly aligned with ecology. On the other hand I also defined the democratic nation. It is a new type of nation that encompasses all cultural entities, from ethnicity to religion, from urban, local and regional to national communities formed through democratic autonomous political formations and its main political form: democratic confederalist implementations. More precisely, against the nation-statist monsters, the democratic nation is a nation

that has multi-political formations, multiple identities and is multicultural.

As we try to analyse the last 5,000 years of civilisational history in terms of the two conflicting poles, we understand that these two poles will continue to coexist for some time to come. The eradication of one of the poles by the other is not foreseeable in the near future. Moreover, dialectically this does not seem realistic. The rashness of real socialism in this regard, and its attempt to try implementing its own system without first analysing civilisation and modernity, resulted in its own dissolution. The important thing is to take into account this bipolarity in all theoretical and practical work, and continuously to develop democratic civilisation and modernity within daily life and through new constructive work. The more we develop our system through both revolutionary and evolutionary methods, the more we can positively solve the problems of term and space and make the solution permanent. Democratic modernity as a system, including its fundamental elements, is well suited for true peace. The democratic nation, with its clear ability to create solutions from the smallest national community through to a world nation, offers a very valuable peace option.

The important thing is to institutionalise the communal and democratic identity, which is also the basic stance of peoples historically, with contemporary science and technological resources by unifying them. In order to have a more democratic, liberated and ecological social structure, there is a need above all for a new social sciences structure. It should not be forgotten that the most comprehensive and permanent component of democratisation is women's freedom. Without the attainment of societal gender equality, no demand for freedom or equality can be meaningful or realised.

Nowadays, democracy is needed, just like bread air and water, but nowhere more so than for the peoples of the Middle

East. There is no other option but democracy – all others have been tested throughout history – which has the ability to bring happiness to the people. The Kurds are at the forefront of these peoples. If they can successfully mobilise their geography, historical time and societal characteristics – all of which have become significant strategic elements – in favour of democratic civilisation in the Middle East, they will have done the greatest good for their neighbours and for humanity. What we have undertaken is a draft of this noble and exciting task.

This brochure is compiled from Bir Halkı Savunmak *and* Manifesto for a Democratic Civilisation, *Volumes I, II, III and V*

On the Author

Abdullah Öcalan, born in 1949, studied political sciences in Ankara. He actively led the Kurdish liberation struggle as the head of the PKK from its foundation in 1978 until his abduction on 15 February 1999. He is regarded as a leading strategist and one of the most important political representatives of the Kurdish people.

Under isolation conditions at İmralı Island Prison, Öcalan has written more than ten books, which have revolutionised Kurdish politics. Several times he initiated unilateral ceasefires of the guerilla and presented constructive proposals for a political solution to the Kurdish issue. The so-called "peace process" started in 2009 when the Turkish state responded to Öcalan's call to resolve the Kurdish issue politically. This process broke down in April 2015, when the Turkish state unilaterally terminated the talks and returned

to a policy of annihilation and denial.

Since 27 July 2011, Öcalan has been held again in almost total isolation at Imrali Island Prison. Since 5 April 2015, the whole prison has been completely cut off from the rest of the world.

On the International Initiative

On 15 February 1999, the President of the Kurdistan Workers‘ Party, Abdullah Öcalan, was handed over to the Republic of Turkey following a clandestine operation backed by an alliance of secret services directed by their corresponding governments. Disgusted by this outrageous violation of international law, several intellectuals and representatives of civil organisations launched an initiative calling for the release of Abdullah Öcalan. With the opening of a central coordination office in March 1999, the International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan" started its work.

The International Initiative regards itself as a multinational peace initiative working for a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish question. Even after long years of imprisonment, Abdullah Öcalan is still regarded as an undisputed leader by the majority of the Kurdish people. Hence, the solution of the Kurdish question in Turkey will be closely linked to his fate. As the main architect of the peace process, he is viewed by all sides as key to its successful conclusion, which puts Öcalan's freedom increasingly firmly on the agenda.

The International Initiative is committed to play its part to this end. It does this through disseminating objective information, lobbying and public relations work, including running campaigns. By publishing translations of Öcalan's prison writings it hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the origins of the conflicts and the possible solutions.

Publications by Abdullah Öcalan

Books

Declaration on the Democratic Solution of the Kurdish Question (1999)
Prison Writings I: The Roots of Civilisation (2007)
Prison Writings II: The PKK and the Kurdish Question in the 21st Century (2011)
Prison Writings III: The Road Map to Negotiations (2012)
Civilization: The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings (Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Volume I) (2015)
Capitalism: The Age of Unmasked Gods and Naked Kings (Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Volume II) (2017)

Upcoming and Untranslated

Sociology of Freedom
(Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Volume III)
Bir Halkı Savunmak (Turkish 2004)
Ortadoğu'da Uygarlık Krizi ve Demokratik Uygarlık Çözümü (Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Volume IV) (Turkish 2010)
Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü (Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Volume V) (Turkish 2012)

Brochures

War and Peace in Kurdistan (2008)
Democratic Confederalism (2011)
Liberating Life: Woman's Revolution (2013)
Democratic Nation (2016)

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www.ocalan-books.com


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